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Local Student Wins Energy Poster Contest

(Columbia)— Panchee Herr, a thirteen year old eighth-grade student at Florence Chapel Middle School in Duncan, SC, has been named first place winner of the first annual “October is Energy Awareness Month” poster contest, sponsored by the South Carolina Energy Office (SCEO).

In October, the US. Department of Energy and SCEO celebrated the 25th annual “October Is Energy Awareness Month” campaign. The goal of Energy Awareness Month is to promote a greater public understanding and awareness of energy sources, how they can be used wisely and effectively, and the importance of energy to the economic prosperity and future of the United States and South Carolina.

Sixth-grade students were invited to create posters using the national theme *Smart Energy Choices – support our economy, protect our environment, and increase our energy independence.*

“Panchee Herr is the first student to win an award in our brand new school. She is extremely talented in art. We are so proud,” said Barbi Franklin, Visual Arts teacher for Florence Chapel Middle School.

“We know that participation in arts has a positive effect on a student’s academic success,” said Principal Steve Gambrell. “We are very excited to have Panchee Herr receive this honor. Good job, Panchee!”

In honor of Panchee’s achievement, a permanent banner was made of her poster and will be displayed at Florence Chapel Middle School. Panchee was rewarded with a gift card from a local merchant.

Each day, South Carolinians depend on the benefits of energy, usually without considering the role that energy plays in our quality of life. Every aspect of our lives, those of our children and future generations is affected by the energy choices and decisions we make today. By choosing an energy-efficient appliance for your home or business; having a local utility do an energy audit on your home; using mass transportation; or simply turning off lights and equipment when not needed, we can help reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil and protect the environment.

South Carolina is a growing state. As our economy has developed, so too have our energy needs. South Carolinians spend about \$10.2 billion on energy each year. Because we produce no uranium, no coal, no oil, and no natural gas, approximately 85 percent of this amount, or about \$8.6 billion, directly leaves the state’s economy. Promoting energy efficiency within the state is therefore a primary focus of the SCEO.

The US Department of Energy and the South Carolina Energy Office encourage everyone to become more energy aware at home, school and at work. With everybody’s help, our fellow citizens, coworkers, and communities will focus on the importance of energy in today’s world and our responsibility to ensure that tomorrow’s energy needs are met.

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